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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Vietnam

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L NO FOREIGN DISSEM

COUNTRY	SOUTH VIETNAM	REPORT NO.	TDCS -3/541,020
SUBJECT	THE SEEKING OF AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE OVERTHROW OF THE DIEM REGIME	DATE DISTR.	20 MARCH 1963
		PRECEDENCE	ROUTINE
DATE OF INFO.	MID-MARCH 1963	REFERENCES	IN 89614
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	VIETNAM, SAIGON (14 MARCH 1963)		
APPRAISAL	SEE BELOW	FIELD REPORT NO.	FVS-8662

FILE

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE A HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL (C), WITH EXTENSIVE CONTACTS AT THE PRESIDENCY.

APPR THIS REPORT IS TYPICAL OF VIEWS HELD BY CERTAIN OPPOSITIONISTS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE FELLOW-TRAVELLING CATEGORY. COMMENTS OF THIS NATURE HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE BY GOVERNMENT PROVOKERS SEEKING TO PROVOKE AMERICAN REACTION. THE LINE THAT DIEM IS ACCEPTABLE, BUT THAT HIS FAMILY, ADMINISTRATION, AND PROGRAMS ARE NOT, IS ALSO CHARACTERISTIC OF VARIOUS OPPOSITION ELEMENTS AS WELL AS SOME SEGMENTS OF THE LEFT. THE ESTIMATE CONTAINED HEREIN ON A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS, INCLUDING THE APPRAISAL THAT THE STRATEGIC HAMLET PROGRAM IS HIGHLY DANGEROUS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM OR TO AMERICAN OBJECTIVES, IS NOT ACCEPTED.

1. AMERICAN AID IS ESSENTIAL TO AN OVERTHROW OF THE DIEM REGIME, ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENTS MADE BY TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF A COMMITTEE OF NATIONALIST ANTI-COMMUNIST POLITICAL OPPOSITIONISTS IN MID-MARCH 1963, IN THE PRESENCE OF AN OFFICIAL OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SECURITY SERVICE (SEPES), WHO MAY ALSO BE A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE. THE COMMITTEE IS ENGAGED IN A STUDY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND MAKING PLANS FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT. ALTHOUGH SEPES' CHIEF TRAN KIM TUYEN IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, BECAUSE OF HIS POSITION, HE HAS PROVIDED CERTAIN SUPPORT FROM TIME TO TIME.

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L NO FOREIGN DISSEM

GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

STATE/INR	DIA	ARMY/ACSI	NAVY	AIR	JCS	SECDEF	NSA	NIC	AID	USIA	OCI	ONE	OCR	ORR	OBI	OO	EXO
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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

THE TWO REPRESENTATIVES INDICATED THAT, IF AMERICAN AID IS NOT FORTHCOMING, OTHER SOURCES WILL BE CONTACTED. IF THE AMERICANS HELP THE NATIONALIST CAUSE OF THE OPPOSITIONISTS, THEY WILL HAVE SOME MEASURE OF CONTROL OVER THE RESULTS; OTHERWISE, THEY WILL HAVE NONE. (FIELD COMMENT. FVS 8654, TDCS-3/540,447, REPORTED AN EARLIER DISCUSSION BY THESE INDIVIDUALS.)

2. ACCORDING TO THESE OPPOSITIONISTS, THE COUNTRY HAS REACHED A COMPLETE IMPASSE AND SOMETHING MUST HAPPEN SOON. IF DIEM SHOULD DIE SUDDENLY, THE RESULT WOULD BE CHAOS, OUT OF WHICH THE COMMUNISTS WOULD EMERGE AS THE ONLY BENEFICIARIES. DIEM REMAINS IN POWER ONLY AS THE RESULT OF AMERICAN MILITARY SUPPORT, WITHOUT WHICH HE WOULD BE COMPLETELY LOST. THE DIEM GOVERNMENT IS WORSE THAN IMPOSSIBLE. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF GROUPS IN THE COUNTRY, SUCH AS THE HOA HAO AND THE CAO DAI, THAT ARE COMPLETELY OPPOSED TO COMMUNISM BUT CANNOT POSSIBLY SUPPORT THE PRESENT REGIME, WHEREAS THEY COULD SUPPORT SOME OTHER NATIONALIST TYPE OF GOVERNMENT. PRESIDENT DIEM IS PERSONALLY A DECENT AND HONORABLE MAN, BUT NGO DINH NHU AND HIS WIFE MUST BE ELIMINATED; WITHOUT THEM, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO RE-ORIENT DIEM.

3. THE STRATEGIC HAMLET PROGRAM IS HIGHLY DANGEROUS BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH THE AMERICANS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM ARE EITHER

UNAWARE OF OR UNWILLING TO FACE IT, THE STRATEGIC HAMLETS ARE HEAVILY INFILTRATED WITH VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS (VC), WHOSE PRESENCE WILL MAKE ITSELF KNOWN IN DUE COURSE. THE REPUBLICAN YOUTH MOVEMENT IS ONLY A LONG SERIES OF MEETINGS AND IS COMPLETELY LACKING IN DEPTH AS AN ORGANIZATION; IT IS A SUPERFICIAL VENEER, GOING THROUGH VARIOUS FRUITLESS MOTIONS. THE PRINCIPAL CRITERION FOR SELECTION OF PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT LEADERS IS PERSONAL OBEDIENCE TO THE REGIME; COMPETENCE IS ONLY AN AFTERTHOUGHT.

4. IF THE SITUATION CONTINUES IN ITS PRESENT VEIN, THERE WILL BE A RENEWED VC OFFENSIVE ON A LARGER SCALE SOON AFTER THE ONSET OF THE RAINY SEASON, WHEN BAD WEATHER REDUCES THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HELICOPTERS AND AIR CAPABILITY IN GENERAL. THIS WILL BEGIN NEAR THE SAIGON AREA, AND, AT THE SAME TIME THE VC WITHIN THE STRATEGIC HAMLETS WILL GO INTO ACTION.

5. FIELD DISSEM. STATE ARMY NAVY AIR USMACV MAAG AID USIA CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF 9TH FIELD STATION 2ND AIR DIVISION.

END OF MESSAGE